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ABSTRACT

Civic education, not so long ago, was regarded as a core purpose of grade school preparation for adulthood, a mandate to educate young people about U.S. history, freedom and values, and citizenship's responsibilities. The landmark 1999 Civic Education Study, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, found the mean scores of U.S. 14-year-olds significantly higher than the international means of 28 other countries. This issue of "Basic Education" begins by looking overseas to the Czech Republic in the article "Civic Education in the Czech Republic: Citizenship after the Fall of Communism" (Ondrej Hausenblas) that recounts the challenges facing citizenship education in a post-communist society. The article, "A North Carolina Partnership Shares Lessons Learned about Civic Education" (Debra Henzey), brings readers to North Carolina, where a statewide collaborative works with public schools and community organizations to support civic education. The article "Service Learning: A Promising Practice" (La Verna Fountain) explores how students may acquire a new sense of civic responsibility and experience their capacity to shape public policy. The article "What's in a Name: Law Related and Civic Education" (Annette Boyd Pitts) examines how classroom exercises such as the case study and debate bring to life legal processes, principles of law, rights, and responsibilities. (BT)

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Ondrej Hausenblas, Debra Henzey, La-Verna Fountain, Annette Boyd Pitts

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Vol. 47 No. 4, May/June 2003

Basic Education

Anne Rogers Poliakoff, Editor

Contents

2 Editor's Note

3 Civic Education in the Czech Republic: Citizenship After the Fall of Communism
By Ondrej Hausenblas

9 A North Carolina Partnership Shares Lessons Learned About Civic Education
By Debra Henzey

15 Service Learning: A Promising Practice
By La-Verna Fountain

21 What's In A Name: Law-related and Civic Education
By Annette Boyd Pitts

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.

Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson's admonition speaks directly to those who regard the youth of America with fear and uncertainty in terms of their capacity to lead our nation deeper into the 21st century. Civic education, not so long ago, was regarded as a core purpose of grade school preparation for adulthood, a mandate to educate young people about American history, freedoms and values, and citizenship's responsibilities. Jefferson's position—adopted by the Center for Civic Education as the expression of its rationale and goals—demands that we not only accept the challenge of trusting "The People," but that we recognize our responsibility to educate and train them to manage our society into the future.

The landmark 1999 Civic Education Study, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, found the mean scores of U.S. fourteen-year-olds significantly higher than the international means of twenty-eight other countries. Looking more closely at the data, however—as we will do in the July/August 2003 issue of *Basic Education*—raises questions about how well we are informing our children's discretion. For example, our students are only about as likely as the average international student to understand political parties or recognize undemocratic governmental action. They are far more interested in engaging in community service than in politics. Three-fourths study the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. Congress—is this sufficient?—yet fewer than half take an active role in such classroom exercizes in democracy as debate, discussion, or mock trials.

In this issue, we begin by looking overseas to the Czech Republic, as Ondrej Hausenblas recounts the challenges facing citizenship education in a post-communist society. Debra Henzey brings us to North Carolina, where a statewide collaborative works with schools and community organizations to support civic education. La-Verna Fountain explores how students may acquire a new sense of civic responsibility and experience their capacity to shape public policy. Annette Boyd Pitts examines how classroom exercises like the case study and debate bring to life legal processes, principles of law, rights and responsibilities.

The July/August issue continues our examination of civic education and other topics. In September, we will take a close look at the liberal arts in the era of the No Child Left Behind Act.

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Civic Education in the Czech Republic: Citizenship After the Fall of Communism

By Ondrej Hausenblas

Western educators, both in the United States and Western Europe, may find the development of citizenship education in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe enlightening. The population of a post-totalitarian country may differ little from the average citizenry of Western democracies, as far as interest in democratic structures of state and society are concerned. Deeper understanding of democratic principles, however, such as human rights, equality in law or in access to education, as well as knowledge of democratic institutions and mechanisms, is often missing among most of the population. When educated people, professionals, and leaders of public life lack sound attitudes and experience with democratic principles, special problems result.

Czech society has for centuries been remarkably secularized, and at present it is among the least religious populations in Europe. The influence of the Church and explicitly Judeo-Christian values on civic and political socialization is therefore weak. According to the European Value System Study, more than 72 percent of Czechs consider religion unimportant to their lives, and less than 10 percent attend church regularly (EVSS 1991). Some national surveys suggest that the younger the group under study, the less religious (IVVM 1995).

In a well-established, economically and politically stable nation, the citizen can for a long time co-exist with the state without conflict, in relative safety. In a post-communist country, the inherited disorders of the legal system, of public, economic, and social life, are on the average citizen's daily menu. The opportunity to abandon democratic ways of thinking and acting is always at hand.

What does an international comparison show?

In the 1999 IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) Civic Education Study, fourteen-year-old Czech students scored significantly higher than the international mean on civic knowledge. Teachers as well as students placed great importance on factual knowledge about institutions and democratic principles. Two-thirds of the students viewed their civic education and history lessons as data-driven lectures that should be memorized. Czech students, however, are among those internationally who believe that their schools poorly inform them about the importance of elections.

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For forty years, the average citizen of Czechia was pressured to believe that only the Party and the government could take initiative in social, economic, and political life. Teachers today would like to place more emphasis on training for independent thinking, for social and political action. They would like to develop the student's system of values. The classroom reality is different, however. Students are mostly passive—not only in learning but in public affairs. A student's interest in civics should start with a sense of trust in his or her ability to influence what happens in public life, but only four percent of Czech teachers of civic education believe that encouraging their students to take part in civic activity should be a priority. According to a 1995 investigation of the Czech School Inspection, 66 percent of school orders do not set forth any student rights. Orders and prohibitions dominate, and the school orders of almost one-fifth are formulated exclusively as a set of directives. Teachers, on the other hand, are rarely explicitly subject to any order or code.

A piece of history

Shortly after the fall of the regime in 1989, those teachers who had graduated from universities during the years of communism suddenly found themselves with a difficult task. They had to learn new democratic principles and new interpretations of the state's role in civic society. Many also had to change themselves: they had served the regime, regurgitating Marxist-Leninist misinterpretations of reality to the parents of their present students. Of course, many honest teachers had always avoided lies, but nevertheless they had had to avoid the touchy topics of civil liberty, of human rights, of the evident discrepancy between the state of the economy in the West and in the East, and so forth. Many other teachers, however, did not even see the falsity of the ideological concepts and explanations they had taught under communism.

Not only the teacher, but indeed the whole concept of civic education had to change almost from one day to the next. Where could competent textbook or curriculum writers be found, after fifty years of totalitarian rule? Even before Communism, for generations teachers were trained to follow in detail the lead of the textbooks and centralized curriculum. Teaching methods in all subjects excluded substantial or active contributions from students. All school subjects —sometimes with the exception of music and the arts—have for centuries been taught as "-logies." The descriptive science tradition demanded that facts be memorized and classified into prescribed conceptual boxes. This approach brought many a success in factual fields of knowledge, and also in international surveys like TIMSS, but has not trained students to be democratic citizens.

The standard state curriculum since the 1990s includes citizenship courses at all levels of schooling. Fundamentals of citizenship are taught, beginning in

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the second grade of the general compulsory "basic school" up through the ninth grade (students aged 6-15), as well as during the higher grades of the "gymnasium" (ages 16-19), and in other secondary schools (other students aged 16-19 who continue in school). The basic schools and non-academic secondary schools try to teach civic education so as to provide a practical orientation in public affairs, institutions, and social, political, and administrative mechanisms. The more academically oriented gymnasium emphasizes the "-logies," that is, the basics of sociology, psychology, philosophy, and anthropology.

How could new approaches to civic education be introduced?
The need to change civic education has led to new textbooks; new state curriculum; new programs; improved professional development; and more freedom for teachers to develop their own curricula. Last, but not least, is the approach that promises the most fundamental change: teachers and their trainers focus not so much on the subject as on transforming the climate of learning and teaching, the values and mechanisms that rule classroom and school.

New textbooks appeared soon after the revolution (Fischerová 1996). Teachers were in great need of any resources. Teachers and students more typically devoted class time to group readings and discussion than to enumerating state institutions or historical data. Many teachers applied the methods of discussion and social training from the newly introduced subject of "family education," which touches on themes like personality development and attitude formation. Since the late 1990s, teams of university teachers and school teachers cooperated in the translation and adaptation of textbooks.

The most difficult way to influence teaching practice was to introduce a new curriculum. The state soon provided alternatives to the former state curriculum: the *Obecna skola* (General School) and *Obcanska skola* (Civic School) curricula. A non-governmental project produced *Narodni skola* (National School), a very open document inviting a team of teachers to create their own curriculum within a framework that specified attitudes, skills, and topics.

Although it was not difficult to set up a team of authors to write a new curricular document using these frameworks, its implementation revealed the weaknesses of this strategy. Only about 20 percent of schools adopted the new curriculum in 1996, and even fewer in subsequent years. Schools usually adopted the new curriculum because it allowed more freedom to teachers and more scope to develop student skills. But many schools soon returned to the earlier curriculum, based on factual knowledge, because of the pressure to perform well on the traditional admittance exams for higher schools. The new curricular documents preferred to specify activities or skills as goals, which appeared --to the authors of tests—too difficult to measure and assess.

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Several international and national programs have introduced new approaches in civic education to Czechia. The U.S. Embassy in Prague initiated most of them in the second half of the 1990s. Among them were:

Project Citizen (The Center for Civic Education in Calabasas, California). A project operating in many countries that trains school children to take civic action. Teams of students work alongside their teachers to state and analyze community problems, define and choose among possible solutions, and develop action that will bring the solution to life.

Project "Street Law" (Originating with the U.S. Partners for Democratic Change, coordinated in Czechia from 1998 onward by Partners Czech, Inc.). The program organized public and school-based discussions and training and adapted a textbook for the Czech legal environment.

Project Solving and Mediation of Conflicts (Organized by Partners Czech, Inc. with Partners for Democratic Change). The program trains teachers or other participants, not to teach civic education, but to engage in effective strategies.

Universities also began to provide new training for teachers. Change among university professors occurs more slowly, because they do not directly face the problems of the "street," of pupils and their families. The main problem with universities appears to be their emphasis on descriptive and conceptual approaches to the teaching of civic education. Currently, departments of civic education provide well-balanced studies for pre-service teacher candidates. The outstanding problem is to connect well-structured course content with appropriate teaching methods. The foundations of democracy cannot simply be described in lectures and books, nor can the assimilation of democratic principles be tested. University teachers must learn to exemplify democratic behaviors, and students must have opportunities to acquire them.

Inevitably, in the early 1990s, aspects of twentieth-century history had to be "re-searched" and "re-written." The history departments in most universities took on this task and found teachers responsive when they offered contemporary history courses. Civic education departments in teacher training programs also had to be deeply reconstructed: some teachers had to leave, others tried to change, new teachers arrived. New professors were often drafted from philosphy departments, and sometimes even from the clergy, because the teaching of ethics became one of the first instruments of moral restoration and re-education. Of great help to some universities were emigrants returning from Western universities, and young post-graduates who, through international exchange programs, had spent a semester or more abroad. Scholarships and the Fulbright exchange program also brought visiting professors who introduced new ways to research, lecture, learn, and model behavior to students.

One program that tries to connect pre-service and inservice teacher training is New Horizons in Civic Education (Cauwenberghe and Dostálová 1996). The

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project team, intending to create a course open to any pre-service teacher candidate, discovered that the faculties were not ready to introduce new cross-curricular courses and narrowed the project to serve only civic education students.

University faculties often work in cooperation with non-governmental nonprofit associations to offer inservice training for teachers who graduated before 1989. Because of the Czech government's enduring disinterest in education, only a limited group of teachers take advantage of training. The Ministry of Education officially recognizes a few programs, on which schools spend a little money. But most teachers participate voluntarily, without pay, and their superiors and colleagues usually regard their participation as unwelcome.

A number of teachers have developed civic education projects, mainly thanks to the vacuum created by the absence of prescribed contents and methods after the fall of the regime. Few Czech teachers are associated with professional groups. The exceptions are those working with international programs that bring in funding. The best known among these in civic education is the SVOD (Association for Civic Education and Democracy). Although their numbers are few, these pioneers have helped create the recognition in the public sphere that improving civic education is a necessity. Given the difficult financial situation facing the education system and its teachers in Czechia, it is extremely important that these programs find international support—from the U.S. Embassy in Prague, the Jan Hus Foundation, and the Open Society Institute in New York.

Apart from the civic education mainstream, there are several independent teacher training programs that try to improve civic society, not through subject-oriented education but through a holistic approach to teaching and to school. A training program called "Dokazu to" ("I will manage!") is provided by AISIS, a nongovernmental organization, in the city of Kladno. The program, written by Czech psychologists, offers a kind of "social therapy" for teachers, intended to shape their relations with pupils. The goal is to establish honest and equal relations between teacher and students. Teachers are trained in activities to improve self-esteem, respect for self and others, assertive communication, and sharing. The program gradually includes whole school teams.

Another interdisciplinary teacher training program is the International Reading Association's program *Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking*. It has operated in the Czech Republic since 1997, led at first by volunteers from universities in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain with support from the Open Society Institute in New York. The program trains teachers to implement the principles of constructivist pedagogy in order to establish democratic behaviors and an equal approach to learning at the most basic level of daily life. Sharing, mutual respect and help, cooperation, and a safe environment for expressing individual ideas are considered to be the *sine qua non* for future citizens.

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The history of civic education in the Czech Republic reflects the state of democracy in Czech society. Without contact with the expertise of Western educators, the curriculum and teaching methods would falter before the population's need. Yet, even if we believe that human rights and democratic principles are common to all, it is impossible simply to copy foreign models without adaptation. Teachers of civic education, even if better informed about democracy, are like their pupils' parents—typical citizens of post-communist society, inevitably influenced by fifty years of totalitarianism. Many citizens, facing the staggering problems of public life and the economy, are less trusting of democratic ideals. The prospect of many years of painstaking development towards a democratic society is alien to a people who for half a century were manipulated not to take responsibility and to be satisfied with superficial solutions.

Ondrej Hausenblas, Ph.D., is senior lecturer at the Pedagogical Faculty, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic. His primary work is training teachers for democratic improvement. He has served as a consultant to a number of civic education projects, coordinated by the U.S. Embassy in Prague and by the Open Society Institute, New York.

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A North Carolina Partnership Shares Lessons Learned About Civic Education

By Debra Henzey

No one ever told me that civics was important…not my parents, not my friends, and definitely not my classes.
The big tests that we stress out over—those aren't the civics or history tests. It's all about math and reading. And colleges don't care about them either.
Politics is boring and useless… just a bunch of disagreeable people who can't get anything done. I don't want anything to do with it.

These are North Carolina middle and high school students, but they could be from anywhere in the nation. Such views are common, as are the troubling declines—in voter turnout, political participation, civic knowledge, and participatory skills—which reflect these views.

This reality gave birth in the mid-1990s to the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, a statewide collaborative. First, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation completed a review of K-12 civic education and found serious deficiencies. At the same time, public officials involved with the Institute of Government (now the School of Government) at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill urged the new director of the Institute to make civic education a top priority.

These and related efforts merged together to form the Civic Education Consortium, founded in 1997 as a non-partisan, privately funded partnership located in the School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill. Nearly 200 diverse organizations from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors across North Carolina banded together to find collaborative ways to revitalize the civic education of our young people through both schools and community organizations. The Consortium has accomplished many of its initial strategies, directly involving more than 55,000 young people and 3,000 teachers and adult leaders.

Since the beginning, the Consortium has served as a welcoming umbrella for any organization or individual concerned about civic education. Key partners, such as teachers and community leaders, have determined our strategic plan and priorities, which focus on the major barriers identified by civic educators.

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Initially, these included: inadequate opportunities for students to apply civics lessons to real issues; lack of student access to public officials; excessive demands on teachers to "teach to the test"; insufficient teacher preparation; and student apathy toward democratic participation. The Consortium and its partners developed an action plan. Highlights of these early programs include:

Small Grants: We have offered six rounds of grants ($1,000-$10,000 each) to school and community-based programs to support effective civic education practices, especially those reaching diverse audiences, large numbers, or remote regions of the state. This program has allowed us to identify model programs, enlist new partners, and reward those doing good work.
Teacher Training: We have offered summer teacher training programs with a focus on interactive teaching strategies and local government course content.
State Standards: We were united in shaping the recently revised social studies standards, which strengthened North Carolina's required high school civics and economics course as well as civic education in the early grades. We shaped the Student Citizenship Act of 2001, a new law that strongly urges the State Board of Education to require certain civics activities in schools, including community service and democratic simulations. This year, we have helped draft pending legislation urging all schools to support an active student council and interactive current events discussions in several courses from grades 6-12.
Civic Index: One of our work groups developed the concept for a statewide measure of citizenship competencies, including a major survey of youth (ages 13-17) and adults. The first results, released in May of this year, included measures of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, actions, and opportunities. The Index will provide a benchmark for our work, enhance visibility and support for civic education, and provide data to guide those involved in civic education. See www.civics.org for details.
Governor's Committee: We have co-chaired for Governor Michael Easley an advisory committee on character education and citizenship, which is in the early stages of developing recommendations.

In the past year, the Consortium has increased its programming and impact substantially, thanks to new funds from national foundations and partnerships:

Project 540º: Funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and coordinated by Providence College (Rhode Island), this project links twenty-one high schools in North Carolina to more than 200 others across the nation. Students engage other students to develop school-based civic action plans.
Rural Youth Leadership: We worked with a team of organizations to design model youth leadership programs in two rural, isolated counties, to involve

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young people with local government boards and economic development.
Statewide Policy Summit: The Consortium will convene a statewide policy summit on December 4, 2003 to explore with policymakers and teachers how state and local policy shape civic education practices. Results from the North Carolina Civic Index will serve as a framework, as will *The Civic Mission of Schools,* released by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2003), which summarizes what research tells us about effective civic education, and *Every Student a Citizen,* recommendations by the Education Commission of the States (2000).
National Involvement and Technical Assistance: We have been involved in national initiatives such as the White House "We the People Forum" on May 1st, 2003, and the Educational Film Center's efforts to produce teacher training videos and related materials. We have provided technical assistance to other states.

Over the next year, the Consortium will focus more attention on democratic simulations and other interactive classroom strategies, and on gaps in research, especially those related to the long-term impact of service learning.

Lessons Learned About Effective Civic Education In the Classroom
Although we need to know more about what schools and teachers can do to encourage lifelong civic engagement, the Consortium's Civic Index results and our work with schools have already yielded important lessons.

Embracing Tried-and-True Strategies. Classroom strategies once considered outdated may in fact succeed. Our 2003 Civic Index showed that applying civics studies to real community issues, requiring students to keep up with current events, and allowing students to interact with public officials, all have a substantial impact. However, these results also show that about half the students—a greater proportion among low-income and nonwhite—no longer have classes that use these strategies. Some school personnel resist these strategies for fear that students will delve into controversial issues or upset officials. These fears are understandable in today's lawsuit-driven world, but we risk far more by not giving students a safe place to discuss issues. If not in school, where do we expect them to have these opportunities?

Classes can engage in such discussions constructively. In Caldwell County, one of our most courageous teachers uses dialogue to enable his students to have civil discourse on a wide range of issues—including such hot topics as abortion laws, the death penalty, and racial profiling in law enforcement. The classroom goal is not to reach a public policy conclusion, but to see issues from many perspectives and discuss them in a non-threatening way.

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Connecting Service with Civics: The Civic Index showed that many young people are involved in service that has a positive impact on their civic knowledge and attitudes. Yet fewer than half feel that they have addressed real problems in their communities and fewer still are involved in political activities. We could strengthen service programs for students by making more meaningful connections: between the civics curriculum and real community needs, between related public policies and ways for citizens to affect policies.

A Rutherford County high school offered few opportunities for students to be involved in school issues, so Project 540º asked the school board to authorize the formation of a new group, "Student Voices." They also asked the school board for a small grant to address problems in the bathrooms. Students had to learn about the policy-making role of school boards and plan their approach. A community strategic planning effort invited Project 540º students to participate because they have been such a positive force in the school.

Combating the Civics Gap. North Carolina has a civic education gap among lower income students, and a less pronounced, but still significant gap among nonwhite students—a fairly common pattern nationwide. Our Civic Index shows that among both young people and adults, income is the most common factor in predicting civic competency, with race a secondary factor. Lower income students (from homes with incomes of $20,000 or less) were less likely to be enrolled in classes that required them to keep up with current events or connect real issues to civics studies. Nonwhite students appeared to be as involved in service as white students; this did not hold true for lower income youth.

A small grant from the consortium enabled second graders in inner-city Durham to participate in tours of their school's neighborhoods. The students represent many ethnic and religious groups and income levels, yet all eagerly participated in learning about their neighborhoods. They interviewed residents, collected artifacts, drew pictures, took photos, and wrote poems and songs to document the rich history and challenges facing these communities.

Making Studies Relevant. Different public issues excite different students, depending on race, economic situation, community, and other factors. This became apparent in working with Project 540º. Although the schools shared some concerns—such as bathroom sanitation, fears of terrorism and war—others varied widely. We need to help teachers develop ways to identify issues that spark the interest of all students, including low-income and nonwhite students.

Even disengagement can motivate learning, however. Cary, a rapidly growing community west of Raleigh, has few landmarks and many subdivisions. All that young people had in common was no sense of belonging to a community.

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One middle school teacher decided to involve students in an "investigation" of Cary: What is this town we live in? Who are the people who shaped it? What issues do we face? Their journey produced a documentary film that premiered with great fanfare in a major theater.

Teaching Citizenship Outside Civics. We should identify ways for other teachers to reinforce the civics curriculum. Language arts could offer readings and discussions about public heroes or persuasive writing on public policies, and science classes could monitor streams to promote environmental stewardship.

Onslow County Schools illustrated this concept through a partnership with local government, business, and environmental programs. They hosted a summer leadership institute linking civics and science. Students studied the demise of fish in a river, tracked storm water runoff into streams, and measured flood levels—all linked to study of public policy and civic responsibility.

Recommendations for the Future

We need to balance testing with other ways of measuring student achievement in civic education, such as involvement in community activities or ability to defend positions on public policies. Teachers across the nation report substantial pressure to replace the strategies that most encourage civic behavior and attitudes with strategies deemed to have more impact on knowledge related to state-mandated tests. We need more hard data to confirm preliminary results indicating that the same strategies that result in better civic behavior and attitudes also improve academic achievement.

We should encourage schools to offer more opportunities for students to understand school governance and have a voice in policies and programs. Such involvement is one of the highest predictors of lifelong civic engagement. Students and teachers find it hard to embrace democratic principles when schools do not model them. Schools should at least have active student councils with meaningful roles, and reach out to other students, especially low-income and nonwhite students, through other avenues for engagement.

Civics teachers often do not have as much access to professional development as other teachers, according to the mid-1990s Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation study. Schools should support professional development in the content and practice of civic education. Teacher training programs should assure that human development courses adequately focus on the student's development as a responsible person and include opportunities to learn how to use service learning to enrich the civics curriculum. We also would ask that they work with schools to conduct research to fill gaps identified in *The Civic Mission of Schools.*

The most effective civic education programs involve partnerships between schools and community organizations, such as governments, nonprofits, law

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firms, law enforcement, civic clubs, and courts. Such collaborations create rich experiences inside and outside the classroom where young people can make a difference on community issues. These partnerships also can provide valuable resources, including coordination, transportation, and curricular materials. Organizations outside of the schools sponsor many of the best civic education programs, in part because they do not have to adhere to specific standards or tests and serve narrowly defined audiences. Many community-based organizations have a substantial focus on civics, including 4-H Youth Development, Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs and many others.

Not surprisingly, the Civic Index shows that parents and family members are still the most important civics role models. When parents do not participate in public affairs--voting, volunteering, discussing current events—this sends a strong and lasting message that is very hard for school programs to counteract.

School leaders may find some of our recommendations a little alarming. After all, when you give students a chance to be heard, what in the world will they say? If you empower them to act, what might they do? In the end, we must all weigh these risks against our willingness to accept the current state of civic participation, including the downward spiral in voting, by young people.

The poignant story of one high school senior illustrates why the Consortium remains committed to accepting these risks. Lavonne earned mostly Bs and Cs and rarely spoke in class. Through Project 540°, several students in one of her classes became involved in an issue that mattered to Lavonne. Lavonne not only began speaking up in class, her grades improved dramatically, and for the first time she became a leader. A few weeks before graduation, she shared these thoughts:

"I didn't realize until it was almost too late why I had to take social studies. This stuff just didn't seem to matter to me and no one else cared about it either. Students like me are not stupid…and it's not that we don't care. It's just that we need inspiration and we need to know that we can make a difference."

Lavonne has delivered the challenge for all of us—a clear path to follow in building a strong citizenry for our future.

Debra Henzey is Executive Director of the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, based at the School of Government, UNC-Chapel Hill. For more information on the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, see www.civics.org, call 919-962-8273, or email: henzey@iogmail.iog.unc.edu

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Service Learning: A Promising Practice

By La-Verna Fountain

Service learning is one of the most exciting and promising educational tools for strengthening young people's civic engagement and critical thinking skills. Within service learning circles, many are asking the central questions regarding civic education for K-16.

As a pedagogical approach, service learning accommodates the three primary learning styles and all seven multiple intelligences conceived by Howard Gardner. Service learning was first advocated as a methodology in the early 1900s by John Dewey, who said that students would learn more effectively and become better citizens if they engaged in service to the community, service incorporated into the academic curriculum. Today, schools use service learning to improve learning, attendance, and citizenship skills, to decrease risky social behaviors, and to build strong partnerships between schools and communities.

On Chicago's southwest side, Maria High School's diverse student population is challenged to connect what they learn in the classroom to action that they can take to benefit the community. Biology students assessed an illegal dump-site to determine whether the land was suitable for development by a plastics manufacturer. Students studied environmental assessments along with impact studies of plastic molding factories. They presented their findings to city officials, community members, and an interested developer. The site is no longer an eyesore, but instead, a viable business whose existence affirms the ability of young people to recognize, assess, and address community challenges.

Service learning combines meaningful service, identified learning objectives, and structured time for participants to reflect on their experiences. Essentially, service learning should:

1. Allow students to learn through active participation in meaningful service conducted in the community.
2. Provide for decision-making, coordination, and involvement of the community and either an educational institution or community service program in key aspects of the project.
3. Foster civic responsibility.
4. Be integrated into, and enhance—with measurable outcomes—the academic or educational purposes of the school or community service program in which participants are enrolled.
5. Allow students to participate in intentional and formal reflection.

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In the 1990s, service-learning initiatives began to grow exponentially. Nearly one-third of all public schools now incorporate some type of service learning into the curriculum. Learn and Serve America, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, is the nation's largest supporter of service learning, providing grants, training, and technical assistance. Learn and Serve America Director and long-time advocate of service learning, Amy Cohen, is not surprised by the growth in service learning in the schools: "Service learning is a way to engage students in their own education as well as in their own community as active participants. Service learning can be a tool for effective activities that cross school-community boundaries . . . Communities see students as assets to be engaged and students see themselves as important members of society."

Cohen says it is critical that schools "start small." By doing so, schools have an opportunity to build a service-learning curriculum of high quality that benefits students, the school, and the larger community. A two-year study of seventeen middle and high schools with 1,000 Learn and Serve participants, conducted by Brandeis University and ABT Associates, found that schools with service learning initiatives of high quality experience some or all of the following: increased student engagement; improved academic achievement; improved thinking skills; improved character; stronger ties to schools, communities, and society; exposure to new careers; improved school environments; stronger community groups; and increased community support for schools.

Since the desires of a community could quickly overwhelm the requirements of education, Cohen encourages teachers to construct the project so as to insure that it meets academic purposes. Excellent community service may be dismal service learning. If the activity does not engage students academically, it is better to seek another activity.

Nationwide, scholars deliberate on what it means to be a good citizen and on the role of educators in preparing students for civic engagement. They question whether the purpose of service learning is civic development, social justice, education, or simply community service. At the third annual Education Leadership Colloquium, to be held July 16 and 17 in Denver, Colorado, educators, policymakers, researchers, and students will discuss the civic purposes of K-16 education in the United States. The Colloquium is cosponsored by Campus Compact, a national organization of more than 900 college and university presidents interested in promoting the development of student citizenship skills and community engagement, and the Education Commission of the States' National Center for Learning and Citizenship.

Marcia Applen, a teacher at St. Peter High School in St. Peter, Minnesota, says she reluctantly entered the service learning movement in 1989. This year, as

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one of service learning's most tenacious advocates, she received the 2003 National Youth Leadership Council's (NYLC) State Farm Service Learning Practitioner Leadership Award. The NYLC National Service Learning Conference attracted 3,000 people this year, of whom thirty-four percent were students. NYLC is also the convener of the National Service Learning Exchange, a network of volunteer peer mentors.

Applen says service learning offers a solution to one of our pressing academic challenges. "This pedagogy can support a culture that solves the problem of raising academic achievement together, rather than pointing fingers at teachers, students, parents, community, political leaders, etc. Research indicates that poor readers, who teach younger students to read, improve their own reading. The same is true for mathematics. These two areas are targeted in the No Child Left Behind Act, one of the driving forces in today's educational arena."

Numerous publications are available to help anyone interested in learning more about community service and service learning, including *Students in Service to America*, a comprehensive and user-friendly service guide published in 2002. To create the Guide, the Corporation joined forces with the Points of Light Foundation, USA Freedom Corps, and the U.S. Department of Education. Available at www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org, it lists ten steps for bringing service to the classroom:

1. Assess the needs and resources of your community and school.
2. Form community partnerships.
3. Establish specific educational goals and curriculum.
4. Select a project and begin preliminary planning.
5. Plan your project in detail.
6. Acquire necessary funding and resources.
7. Implement and manage project.
8. Organize reflection activities.
9. Assess and evaluate your service project.
10. Celebrate achievements.

Schools can implement service learning across the school, a grade, or as part of one course. However, according to Applen, our challenge is more than simply to implement service learning. "In order to bring about the systemic changes needed to meet the modern day educational challenges, service learning must be institutionalized in the education culture. Such institutionalization will encourage more teachers to at least be open to service learning and insure personnel changes do not diminish the success of this proven methodology."

The following six schools, all recipients of the Corporation for National and Community Service's 2002 Service Learning Leader School Awards, demon-

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strate how service learning can make a difference in academic and civic performance, helping ordinary schools produce extraordinary results. Since 1999, the Corporation has recognized 174 schools in 45 states as Leader Schools.

At Langley Middle School in Langley, Washington, all the students and most of the faculty and staff engage in service learning. One unique project is Youth in Philanthropy, led by an eighth-grade English and Communication class. With support from the Glaser Foundation, students locate community assets and interview local leaders. Students review their research and identify community needs and local nonprofit organizations that could address those needs. Students then select nonprofits to receive $10,000 each to help meet the needs.

Seventh-grade students at Langley Middle School worked on wetlands restoration with a local AmeriCorps team. Students were involved in every aspect of the wetlands project—from working with the local planning commission to shoveling mud and building structures. The project also incorporated essential learning requirements from the Washington State Science Standards.

In 1997, the Nicholas Senn High School in Chicago, Illinois, turned to service learning to get the school off academic probation, the result of poor test scores and attendance. Five years later, Nicholas had improved reading and math scores, attitudes toward school, attendance and behavior, and discipline. According to Judith Hernandez, the high school's principal, "Service learning teaches students to care and give back to the community without compensation. Students are able to connect with others in a non-threatening way and explore their humanity. It also gives the school a stronger affirmation as a viable and important part of society."

In a history class students researched and discussed hunger in America and what they could do about it. Local food bank representatives visited the classroom to discuss the daily challenges of feeding America's hungry. The students then volunteered at the food bank, packaging three tons of food in one day.

Wilkinson Junior High School in rural Middleburg, Florida, began its service learning initiative in 1975. Its success has inspired staff to write the concept into the school's mission statement. Karen Smith, Science Department Chairperson, observed, "Wilkinson's service learning program gives teachers and students opportunities to enrich the educational experience by using multiple instructional approaches that strengthen learning for students with a broad variety of cognitive capabilities. The projects that students undertake offer authentic, complex, multi-layered tasks that tap a wide array of human abilities and require more than just textbook learning."

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Students at Wilkinson worked with a community partner, the St. John's River Water Management District, to develop a 900-acre nature preserve for public use. The students built an eagle observation site at the preserve so that visitors could view an active nest from a safe distance. Students also partnered with the local DuPont Florida Plant to restore a previously mined parcel of land. The students monitored water and soil quality and reforested two wetlands.

Nah Tah Wahsh Public School Academy is a small school that serves the Hannahville Potawatomi Reservation in Michigan. The school has completely incorporated service learning into the K-12 curriculum, ensuring that students take part in at least one service-learning project annually. The students have spent three years on a mosaic wall that depicts math and science at the school as well as Potawatomi and other Indian tribal cultures. Students make maple syrup and sugar in the science class to study the impact of weather on sap. Students give the products to guests and elders, providing an opportunity for young people to connect with their elders, an important Indian tradition.

Elida High School in Elida, Ohio, met with challenges in their attempt to introduce service learning. After initial setbacks in obtaining a grant, and the loss of key teachers just as the program began, the school's service learning program is flourishing in its second decade. Seniors participate in SUCCESS, a yearlong, intensive course that connects service to English and social studies curricula with a special emphasis on multi-culturalism and diversity. Through a partnership with local agencies, students are introduced to the needs of the local community and brainstorm ways to meet those needs. Based on their analysis, students choose to serve where they can personally make a difference.

Tamanend Middle School in Warrington, Pennsylvania, insures that all students understand the importance of service learning from their first day at the school. During sixth-grade orientation, Principal John Skari describes the four keys to success at Tamanend—academics, involvement, kindness, and service to others. Tamanend recognizes service learning, just as it does academics and athletics, and students accept it as the norm. A schoolwide survey revealed that harassment and bullying has decreased.

English teachers have partnered with a shelter to help students study the evolution of homelessness over the decades. A homeless man visited the school to share his poetry with the students; the students, in turn, wrote their own poetry about homelessness. Students also helped at the shelter during the school day. A UNICEF representative spoke to other students. Their teachers then developed lesson plans on population and poverty in less-developed nations. These students also participated in Trick or Treat for UNICEF, raising $1,900.

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The projects at the Leader Schools range in scope, objectives, and participation. All the schools, however, have benefited from the active engagement of students in their learning and in their civic participation. Many other schools, not nationally recognized as Leader Schools, have similarly benefited.

Today, schools in the United States are connected with a rich array of local and international communities, thanks to the diverse backgrounds of K-12 students, and the challenge of teaching has grown more complex. A school culture that supports service learning of high quality may be one of the most promising practices available to prepare students for life beyond school, to connect their learning to their lives, and to ensure that the society they inherit is better because young people care.

La-Verna Fountain is a free-lance writer and President of the Defiant Hope Consulting and Training Company (see www.defianthope.org). She has worked in the community service and service-learning arena for more than a decade.

Resources

National Youth Leadership Council: www.nylc.org
Corporation for National and Community Service: www.cns.gov
National Service Learning Clearinghouse: www.servicelearning.org
National Service Learning Partnership: www.service learning partnership.org
National Service Learning Commission: www.servicelearningcommission.org
National Service Learning Exchange: www.nsle.org
Youth Service America: www.ysa.org
Campus Compact: www.compact.org

Note: All information on the Service Learning Leader Schools, including the Maria High School, was taken from the Corporation for National and Community Service website.

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What's In A Name: Law-Related and Civic Education

By Annette Boyd Pitts

To differentiate between civic education and law-related education requires more analysis than one might expect. Reviewing the descriptions of courses taught in the middle school or high school does not reveal the characteristics that distinguish the two. Although civic education and law-related education are inextricably linked, most notably by content, it is the unique and effective instructional practices essential to law-related education that truly sets it apart.

Practitioners throughout the country would probably agree that it is easier to demonstrate than to define law-related education. Law-related education is a unique combination of content and innovative instructional practices designed to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of young people in preparation for their roles as effective citizens in our constitutional democracy. Considering the critical role that the law plays in American society, it is essential that students understand the law and the legal process and have opportunities to explore how these are "essential to the functioning of politics, culture, and society" (ABA 1995). Students learn about the impact of law on their lives and, ultimately, how they can influence the law.

Instructors teach the content through a wide range of courses such as Law Studies, Legal Systems and Concepts, Court Procedures, and Comparative Law, as well as more traditional or required courses such as American government and civics. In Florida and throughout the country, many school districts have implemented law magnets or academies to emphasize law from an interdisciplinary perspective. Law-related education in elementary schools may arguably be the most important, particularly when designed as a developmental sequence.

Defining Characteristics

Although the term *law-related education* is cumbersome, and many states use the terms *civic education* and *law-related education* interchangeably, it is important to recognize the distinct characteristics of law-related education. For thirty years, research studies have substantiated the positive impact of "law-related curricula and instruction on youth when compared to traditional approaches to teaching and learning law, civics, and government" (Cornett 1997). Such studies have found that students of law-related education know more about law and legal processes, individual rights and responsibilities, and even show improved attitudes and behavior.

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A national evaluation of law-related education (Turner 1994) identified six defining characteristics:

1. Adequate preparation and use of resource persons, such as judges, in the classroom;
2. Delivery of curricular and instructional opportunities of high quality through the balanced selection and presentation of case materials;
3. Use of teaching strategies that promote student interaction and higher order thinking focused on essential law-related knowledge and skills;
4. Sufficient quantity of instruction over the course of a semester or year;
5. Active support and involvement of school administrators; and
6. Development of a professional peer support network for teachers.

Adequately prepared resource persons are an important component of law-related education. Their advance preparation should cover course content as well as interactive teaching strategies to involve the entire class. Their participation should be scheduled so as to fit well with the syllabus. It is also critical to select a balance of presenters so that students have the opportunity to think, discuss, and come to their own reasoned conclusions. Visitors who only offer war stories are not merely ineffective, but may cause more harm than good.

In Florida, Supreme Court justices are exemplary resource persons. They go into schools regularly to present case studies and Supreme Court conferences. Studying real cases, students learn to extract the relevant facts from a scenario, understand the structure and function of courts, apply constitutional principles to actual situations, and come to reasoned conclusions about legal and social issues. First, the class studies the constitutional principle to be addressed, and then students role-play the scenario. The class analyzes the facts and determines procedural remedies for the specific situation. The case travels through the circuit and appellate courts while students develop arguments for both sides of the case. Balance is ensured as the facilitator maintains arguments for both sides through inquiry-based discussion. Students may argue the case through the courts or move directly into the constitutional questions that the Supreme Court will address. Students, playing the role of justices, examine other cases as well as the Florida constitution to reach their conclusions. First, each "justice" arrives at his or her own decision, and then works in groups to reach a decision by the full court. These activities not only combine study of constitutional law with its real life application, but also constitute extraordinarily effective instruction.

The Study of Controversy

The study of law is often the study of controversy, and it is controversy that powerfully engages students in the classroom. It is therefore essential to train

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teachers and resource persons how best to facilitate balanced discussion and examination of controversial issues. Teaching students how to think, not what to think, is often the challenge.

Allowing students to explore a controversial issue from all perspectives is at best challenging for many teachers. The teacher should not reveal his or her opinion on an issue, or some students will feel that the teacher's view is the "right" answer. The case study method is one way to approach this critical challenge in the law-related classroom. As students present their arguments, the teacher asks each side to comment on the arguments that they found most persuasive from the opposing side. This technique encourages students to listen, to analyze, and to reflect on other positions.

Human graphs and other exercises provide opportunities for similar exchanges. The teacher makes a neutral statement about a controversial topic. The graph is a literal way to chart student responses: students stand at different points on a continuum of ideas and perspectives. They are encouraged to attend to different opinions by restating the most persuasive element of the opposing view. The teacher maintains balance in the discussion as students continue to contribute. This activity requires a teacher who is not only comfortable with students voicing controversial opinions, but also with remaining neutral.

One example of such an exercise, often used in Florida, begins with this scenario: police take into custody a juvenile riding a bike at 2:00 a.m. The young man lives in a city with a juvenile curfew ordinance. This simple but real scenario elicits strong differences of opinion, especially from students. Many cities have enacted juvenile curfew ordinances supported by most community residents, who view curfews as necessary to protect society. Business owners generally support such ordinances, and many people believe that being stopped by the police is a minor inconvenience compared to being a victim of crime.

Others argue that curfews discriminate against young people and that parents, not governments, are responsible for determining their children's whereabouts. Furthermore, riding a bike is not a crime, and juveniles should not lose their freedom and be locked up for a legal activity. There are laws on the books to deal with criminal behavior. The government should not be involved in regulating the innocent behavior of minors.

Through this kind of case study, students begin to reflect on their opinions about governmental regulation and its impact on their lives, as well as the fundamental rights of American citizens and the government's obligation to protect citizens. Students analyze the local curfew ordinance and work in groups

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to determine how they would change it. As the students explore the controversy judicially, the teacher helps integrate its constitutional implications. Students ultimately determine whether the curfew ordinance as written was constitutional or violated the fundamental rights of the arrested juvenile.

Training for teachers and resource persons is essential if such lessons are to be effective. Law-related education centers at the state level can provide training programs and materials for teachers interested in law-related education. The American Bar Association maintains a list of center directors in each state. These centers may operate as private entities, or they may be located within professional legal organizations, education departments, or one of the national law-related education organizations that provide resources, training, and materials. The latter include the Center for Civic Education, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, Street Law, and the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity.

The Faces of Law-related Education

Law-related K-12 education has many faces and forms. In the elementary grades, instruction may focus on the need for rules and laws as well as on the foundations of democracy. Even kindergarteners can begin to explore privacy, authority, responsibility, and respect. These constitutional principles and democratic values are becoming a substantial element in contemporary character education. By the fourth and fifth grades, students actively engage in the study of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights through such innovative programs as the Center for Civic Education's "We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution." Many states have developed their own materials.

Middle schools and high schools offer a wide variety of elective law courses such as Law Studies, Comprehensive Law Studies, Legal Systems, Comparative Law, International Law, and Court Procedures. Students have a natural interest in law and its impact on their lives. These classes are very popular among students, especially those interested in a legal career.

Schools also offer law magnets, academies, and institutes, specialized interdisciplinary programs that integrate the study of law. Developed from the desegregation movement, many of these programs evolved as a way to attract students to the school. In Florida, more than fifty programs exist for students with a special interest in law. These schools provide courtrooms on campus, forensic labs, and other special features to enhance the academic and clinical experiences of students. In addition to elective classes, law-related education is often integrated into required courses such as American government, reaching more students but reducing the time devoted to law.

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Many states also recognize the value of law-related education with special populations. The Florida legislature added a requirement to the Academic Intervention/Dropout Prevention Statute in 1999 to include law-related education as a graduation requirement for these students. Juvenile justice facilities and other second chance schools are also incorporating law-related education into the curriculum. Caliber Associates (2001) conducted a review of law-related education, titled *The Promise of Law Related Education as Delinquency Prevention*, commissioned by the Youth for Justice Program, which found a significant and positive impact on student knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Johnson and Hunter (1997) determined that law-related education had great potential to help prevent delinquency, substance abuse, and other problem behaviors.

Conclusion

With so many studies decrying how little Americans know about the U.S. Constitution and their basic rights and responsibilities as citizens, law-related education has become essential in this law-focused society. It is basic to the historic mission of American public education, providing a critical opportunity to develop the knowledge and the skills for self-government and for the preservation and improvement of our democracy and its institutions.

Annette Boyd Pitts is founding Executive Director of the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc., located in Tallahassee, Florida. She is the recipient of numerous state and national awards including the National Improvements in Justice Award and the American Bar Association Isidore Starr Award for Excellence in Law Related Education.

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